

HOW TO GET A LAWYER

1. Hire a member of the private bar.
2. If you are financially unable to hire an attorney, you may apply to have an attorney appointed to represent you in certain cases. To apply you must:

- a. In a **criminal case**, you should contact either the Public Defender office or the Clerk of Court office in the county the criminal charge is pending to find out where you need to go to complete the Application for Appointed Counsel and the requirements you need.

NOTE: To find the County Public Defender office contact information, click on the FIND A DEFENDER button on the home page for SCCID (www.sccid.sc.gov)

- b. In a **DSS or Termination of Parental Rights case**, if you are a defendant, you should go to the Clerk of Court office in the county the case is pending to complete the Application for Appointed Counsel. You will be required to provide proof of employment status and income and pay a non-refundable \$40 application fee. Under some circumstances, the application fee can be waived or reduced.
- c. Public Defenders do not represent people in civil cases. If you need legal assistance for a civil matter and are not able to employ counsel, you may contact the:

South Carolina Legal Services

www.sclegal.org

1-888-346-5592

or

SC Bar Lawyer Referral Service

www.scbar.org

1-800-868-2284

3. To qualify to have an attorney appointed to represent you, a number of factors are considered to determine if you are indigent. Those factors include, but are not limited to, your income, property you may own, the number of people in your household and their income, your debts, and the US Poverty Guidelines. The Poverty Guidelines changes every year. The current guidelines are:

48 States and the District of Columbia 2018 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guideline Table					
Family Size	100%	135%	140%	145%	150%
1	\$12,140	\$16,389	\$16,996	\$17,603	\$18,210
2	\$16,460	\$22,221	\$23,044	\$23,867	\$24,690
3	\$20,780	\$28,053	\$29,092	\$30,131	\$31,170
4	\$25,100	\$33,885	\$35,140	\$36,395	\$37,650
5	\$29,420	\$39,717	\$41,188	\$42,659	\$44,130
6	\$33,740	\$45,549	\$47,236	\$48,923	\$50,610
7	\$38,060	\$51,381	\$53,284	\$55,187	\$57,090
8	\$42,380	\$57,213	\$59,332	\$61,451	\$63,570
9	\$46,700	\$63,045	\$65,380	\$67,715	\$70,050
10	\$51,020	\$68,877	\$71,428	\$73,979	\$76,530
Additional	\$4,180.00	\$5,643.00	\$5,852.00	\$6,061.00	\$6,270.00
2018 Eligible for QMB/SLMB/QI, SSI or applied and income at or below 135% FPL and resources < \$9,060 (individuals) or < \$14,340 (couples)*					

4. By the Constitutions of the United States and South Carolina, you may represent yourself (called Pro Se). However, self-representation may negatively affect your legal rights.